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Groups of countries in special situations: follow-up to the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries

Draft resolution submitted by the Vice-Chair of the Committee, Mr. Tauhedul Islam (Bangladesh), on the basis of informal consultations on draft resolution A/C.2/67/L.9

Follow-up to the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries

The General Assembly,

Recalling the Istanbul Declaration[1] and the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020,[2] adopted at the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries and endorsed by the General Assembly through its resolution 65/280 of 17 June 2011, in which the Assembly called upon all the relevant stakeholders to commit to implementing the Programme of Action,

Reaffirming the overarching goal of the Istanbul Programme of Action of overcoming the structural challenges faced by the least developed countries in order to eradicate poverty, achieve internationally agreed development goals and enable graduation from the least developed country category,

Recalling the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 20 to 22 June 2012, entitled "The future we want",[3]

Recalling also the outcome document of the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals, held in New York from 20 to 22 September 2010,[4]

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[1] *Report of the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, Istanbul, Turkey, 9-13 May 2011* (United Nations publication, Sales No. 11.II.A.1), chap. I.

[2] Ibid., chap. II.

[3] General Assembly resolution 66/288, annex.

[4] See resolution 65/1.

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Recalling further Economic and Social Council resolution 2012/26 of 27 July 2012 on the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020,

Recalling General Assembly resolutions 59/209 of 20 December 2004 and 65/286 of 29 June 2011 on the importance of a smooth transition for countries graduating from the list of least developed countries, and reaffirming the aim of enabling half the least developed countries to meet the criteria for graduation by 2020,

Taking note of the Ministerial Declaration adopted at the Ministerial Meeting of the Least Developed Countries, held in New York on 27 September 2012,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011 to 2020[5] and the report of the Secretary-General on ensuring the effective implementation of the functions of the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States and strengthening its capabilities and its effectiveness, as well as the effectiveness of the United Nations system support provided to least developed countries;[6]

2. *Reaffirms* the commitment, made by the international community in the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development,[3] to assist the least developed countries in their efforts to achieve sustainable development, and also reaffirms the agreement to effectively implement the Istanbul Programme of Action and to fully integrate its priority areas into the framework for action contained in the outcome document, the broader implementation of which will contribute to the overarching goal of the Programme of Action of enabling half the least developed countries to meet the criteria for graduation by 2020;

3. *Expresses serious concern* that after a decade of welcomed steady economic growth, the least developed countries are facing significant challenges in sustaining their economic growth and their economies are projected to grow by an average of 4.1 per cent in 2012, which is considerably below the target of 7 per cent per annum as set out in the Istanbul Programme of Action;[2]

4. *Expresses concern* that the ongoing impact of the economic and financial crisis demonstrates the need for appropriate regional and international support to be deployed in a timely and targeted manner to complement the efforts of the least developed countries aimed at building resilience in the face of economic shocks and mitigating their effects;

5. *Welcomes* the progress made by many least developed countries in mainstreaming the Istanbul Programme of Action into relevant planning documents and development strategies, and calls upon the least developed countries, with the support of their development partners, to fulfil their commitments and to continue their implementation of the Programme of Action, including by integrating its provisions into their national policies and development frameworks and conducting regular reviews with the full involvement of all key stakeholders, and in this regard invites the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries,

[5] A/67/88-E/2012/75 and Corr.1.

[6] A/67/262.

Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, the subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Council, including United Nations regional and functional commissions, the United Nations resident coordinator system and the United Nations country teams to actively support the integration and implementation of the Programme of Action;

6. *Also welcomes* the progress in, and stresses the importance of, mainstreaming the Istanbul Programme of Action into the development cooperation frameworks of development partners, and calls upon the development partners to further integrate the Programme of Action into their respective national cooperation policy frameworks, programmes and activities, as appropriate, to ensure enhanced, predictable and targeted support to the least developed countries, as set out in the Programme of Action, and the delivery of their commitments, and to consider appropriate measures to overcome shortfalls or shortcomings, if any;

7. *Invites* all organizations of the United Nations system and other multilateral organizations, including the Bretton Woods institutions and international and regional financial institutions, to contribute to the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action, including by implementing enhanced substantive and technical assistance to the least developed countries in a timely manner, and to integrate it into their programmes of work, as appropriate and in accordance with their respective mandates, and to participate fully in its review at the national, subregional, regional and global levels;

8. *Invites* the organizations of the United Nations system that have not yet done so to designate specific focal points or organizational units within their secretariat structures with a view to ensuring consistent coordination and monitoring of the implementation of the programmes of action at the agency level;

9. *Calls upon* the developing countries, guided by the spirit of solidarity and consistent with their capabilities, to provide support for the effective implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action in mutually agreed areas of cooperation within the framework of South-South cooperation, which is a complement to, but not a substitute for, North-South cooperation;

10. *Invites* the private sector, civil society and foundations to contribute to the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action in their respective areas of competence in line with the national priorities of the least developed countries;

11. *Calls upon* the least developed countries, their development partners, the United Nations system and all other actors to fully and effectively implement the commitments made in the Istanbul Programme of Action in its eight priority areas, namely, productive capacity, agriculture, food security and rural development, trade, commodities, human and social development, multiple crises and other emerging challenges, mobilizing financial resources for development and capacity-building, and good governance at all levels, in a coordinated, coherent and expeditious manner;

12. *Expresses concern* over the fall of official development assistance to least developed countries by 2 per cent in real terms in 2011, while noting that official development assistance continues to be the largest source of external financing for the development of least developed countries and plays an important role in their development, and that progress has been made during the past decade in increasing the flow of official development assistance to least developed countries,

underlines that the fulfilment of all official development assistance commitments is crucial, including the commitments by many developed countries to achieving the target of 0.7 per cent of gross national product for official development assistance to developing countries by 2015, as well as the target of 0.15 per cent to 0.20 per cent of gross national product for official development assistance to the least developed countries, and urges developed countries that have not yet done so to fulfil their commitments for official development assistance to least developed countries;

13. *Welcomes* steps to improve the effectiveness and quality of aid in least developed countries, and underlines the need for enhancing the quality of aid by strengthening national ownership, alignment, harmonization, predictability, mutual accountability and transparency and results orientation;

14. *Recalls* the commitment, contained in the Istanbul Programme of Action, that donor countries should review their official development assistance commitments in 2015 and consider further enhancing the resources for least developed countries;

15. *Also recalls* the decision, contained in the Istanbul Programme of Action, to adopt, expand and implement investment promotion regimes, as appropriate, for least developed countries, and in this regard requests the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly, for its consideration at its sixty-ninth session, a report focusing on national policies and regulatory frameworks for stimulating foreign direct investment in least developed countries and outlining the options and modalities of investment promotion regimes for least developed countries;

16. *Stresses* the need for the international community to remain vigilant in monitoring the debt situation of the least developed countries and to continue to take effective measures, preferably within existing frameworks, to address the debt problem of those countries, including through the cancellation of the multilateral and bilateral debt owed by least developed countries to creditors, both public and private;

17. *Reiterates* the call for necessary flexibility and political will in order to break the impasse in the Doha Round of trade negotiations, and underlines the need for ensuring timely and effective implementation and operationalization of existing commitments to least developed countries on a lasting basis, such as duty-free, quota-free market access;

18. *Notes* the adoption by the General Council of the World Trade Organization on 25 July 2012 of the organization's guidelines on the accession of least developed countries;

19. *Underlines* the need for giving particular attention to the issues and concerns of the least developed countries in all major United Nations conferences and processes;

20. *Reiterates its request* to the Secretary-General to include the issues of concern to the least developed countries in all relevant reports in the economic, social, environmental and related fields in order to support the implementation of the goals set out in the Istanbul Programme of Action;

21. *Also reiterates* its request to the Secretary-General to take the steps necessary to undertake a joint gap and capacity analysis on a priority basis by 2013, with the aim of establishing a technology bank and science, technology and

innovation supporting mechanism dedicated to the least developed countries, building on existing international initiatives;

22. *Underlines* the need to take the steps necessary to ensure the mutual accountability of the least developed countries and their development partners for delivering the commitments undertaken within the framework of the Istanbul Programme of Action;

23. *Recalls* that a smooth transition of countries graduating from least developed country status is vital in order to ensure that those countries are eased onto a path towards sustainable development without any abrupt disruption to their development plans, programmes and projects;

24. *Strongly encourages* giving appropriate consideration to the special needs and development priorities of the least developed countries, including those listed in the Istanbul Programme of Action, in the elaboration of the development agenda beyond 2015;

25. *Stresses* the need for strengthened coordination and monitoring of and follow-up to the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action, with a view to ensuring effective and efficient implementation and follow-up mechanisms at the country, subregional, regional and global levels;

26. *Takes note* of the work of the Inter-Agency Consultative Group for least developed countries led by the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, and invites the Secretary-General to appropriately integrate it within the framework of the High-level Committee on Programmes of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination in order to ensure necessary coordination and monitoring of the implementation of the programmes of action on a system-wide basis, and also invites the Secretary-General, in his capacity as the Chair of the Chief Executives Board, to include implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action as a standing item on the agenda of the Board;

27. *Recognizes* that, over the years, the responsibilities of the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States have increased considerably in their scope and complexity and that, in addition to its original mandate, the requirement to provide substantive and technical support to the least developed countries has increased;

28. *Underlines* that the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States should be provided with adequate resources to fulfil its mandate for the timely and effective implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action, and requests the Secretary-General to address the allocation of adequate resources for the Office in the context of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015 for effective follow-up, monitoring and implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action;

29. *Strongly encourages* Governments, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, major groups and other donors to contribute in a timely manner to the Trust Fund in support of the activities undertaken by the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked

Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States to support the implementation, follow-up and monitoring of the Istanbul Programme of Action as well as the participation of the representatives from the least developed countries in the annual review meeting on the implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action by the Economic and Social Council as well as in other relevant forums, and in this regard expresses its appreciation to those countries that have made voluntary contributions to the Trust Fund;

30. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its sixty-eighth session a progress report on the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020.